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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.2)*]

53/148. Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and all its subsequent resolutions concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/51 of 9 March 1993[1] and its subsequent resolutions in this regard,

Bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the Commission concerning advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, including its most recent resolution on that subject, resolution 1998/57 of 17 April 1998,[2]

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1993/23 and Corr.2, 4 and 5), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

Bearing in mind also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[3] which reiterates the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

Recalling that the World Conference on Human Rights recommended that more resources be made available for the strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, and their protection,

Noting the progress achieved so far in the promotion and protection of human rights at the regional level under the auspices of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional intergovernmental organizations,

Noting also the expansion, since 1993, of the technical cooperation programme of the Office of the High Commissioner upon the request of the Member States concerned, and the crucial importance of sharing information and experience and developing and strengthening national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Noting further that national institutions can make an important contribution to the ongoing process of developing regional human rights arrangements, including in areas such as human rights education, mutual cooperation and information sharing,

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. *Welcomes* the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

3. *Also welcomes*, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level government expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding of the promotion and protection of human rights issues in the regions, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards and at identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them;

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[3] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[4] A/53/324.

4. *Stresses* the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, renews its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations, under this programme, of organizing information or training courses at the national level for government personnel on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant international bodies, and notes with satisfaction, in that respect, the establishment of technical cooperation projects with Governments of all regions;

5. *Invites* all Governments to continue to support the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner in the field of technical cooperation, with a view to further strengthening regional cooperation and regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;

6. *Reiterates* the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights that human rights officers be assigned if and when necessary to regional offices of the United Nations for the purpose of disseminating information and offering training and other technical assistance in the field of human rights upon the request of the Member States concerned, and in this regard calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner also to disseminate information regarding regional arrangements which exist in different parts of the world;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as foreseen in programme 19 (Human rights) of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights;

8. *Welcomes* the growing exchanges between the Office of the High Commissioner and regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as the growing exchanges between the bodies created by the United Nations in accordance with the treaties dealing with human rights and relevant regional organizations and bodies such as the Council of Europe and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;

9. *Also welcomes* the recent adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights[5] on the establishment of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights;

10. *Invites* States in areas where regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider concluding agreements with a view to the establishment within their respective regions of suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, and recognizes in this context that the annual intergovernmental workshop for the Asia-Pacific region, as stated during the sixth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asia and Pacific Region, held at Tehran from 28 February to 2 March 1998,[6] is an important forum for the discussion of initiatives for regional cooperation;

11. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting, at their request, countries of the different regions under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

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[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1520, No. 26363.

[6] See E/CN.4/1998/50.

13. *Decides* to consider this question further at its fifty-fifth session.

85th plenary meeting
9 December 1998